

Standing up against the abuse of women and children



A WOF participant from KwaZulu-Natal pledging his support against the abuse of women and children at the #100MenMarch

Earlier this year, Working on Fire launched the #NotInMyName campaign to affirm its stance against women and children abuse. Working on Fire male firefighters from Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape joined the #100MenMarch which was launched in Gauteng on Wednesday, 11 July.

This march was organised by the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) as part of the centenary celebrations for former President Nelson Mandela and struggle stalwart Mama Albertina Sisulu.

Working on Fire Managing Director, Trevor Abrahams, applauded the men who attended the #100MenMarch and urged Working on Fire's men to join the movement and say 'not in my name' to curb and eradicate violence against women and children, which often results in death.

"As a father of a 15-year-old daughter, it's very worrying to contemplate the kind of future where women are not treated well," said the MD. The march, which was attended by cabinet ministers, faith-based leaders, members of NGOs and civil servants, was in response to the social challenge to stand against violence against women and children.

Living the Mandela legacy - more than 100 acts of goodwill

Working on Fire embraced the national theme 'Be the Legacy' by launching its 100 Acts of Goodwill as part of the Nelson Mandela Centenary celebrations.

Firefighters and management participated in various activities across the country to commemorate the centenary including encouraging education, something we all know was close to Madiba's heart, helping at elderly centres, lending a helping hand to the homeless, taking care of the environment, assisting the care of animals, bringing relief to those in need and many other activities.

To date, Working on Fire has done more than 100 acts of goodwill which have impacted on hundreds of lives and more activities are planned. Once again, Working on Fire employees have lived and held high our value of



'Making a Difference' while also living Mandela's legacy.

Good service award for Limpopo firefighters

The Mokopane Chamber of Business in Limpopo recently bestowed the Mogalakwena Team with the Best Service Award for their sterling work in their local community.

In the eyes of the community, the Mogalakwena Team are lifesavers and their heroes. When not suppressing wildfires, the team is busy cleaning the community and also educating residents about the impact of fires and sharing tips on how to prevent wildfires occurring.

Under the leadership of their Type 1 Crew Leader, Abelo Duna, the Mogalakwena Team in Limpopo has



Mogalakwena participants received an award for good service

been working very hard since the beginning of the year, implementing integrated fire management in the communities that they serve.

"This team of young firefighters are disciplined, dedicated and committed to their work. The communities around here love them for their willingness to assist at all times," says Mark Wreyford, the Mogalakwena Base Manager.

"These young, brave fire warriors deserve this award, and I'm so proud of them. The change that they have brought to Mokopane is seen everywhere and everyone knows that they render a reliable essential service," says Wreyford.



Matema Gwangwa, Limpopo Provincial Communication Officer

Editorial

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to our July Newsletter and thank you for taking the time to read our latest edition.

This month's edition is packed with stories of what we are doing throughout the country to minimise fire risks during this winter fire season, mainly by targeting communities with high fire risks.

Read the inspiring stories of how our participants are using opportunities provided by Working on Fire to better their lives and those of their families.

In a special photo feature, we also showcase how our management and firefighters honoured the legacy of Nelson Mandela with community work during the recent centenary celebrations of this world icon.

Please share this newsletter with our stakeholders and colleagues.

Happy Reading!!

Acting MD Message:

Shane Christian



Shane was standing in as Acting MD for Trevor Abrahams who was on leave at the time the publication was written

During the past month Working on Fire has been involved in numerous social projects aimed at improving life in the communities in which our teams are based.

Our firefighters and management members in Gauteng, Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal pledged their support for no violence against women and children and called on other men to be part of the solution during the #100MenMarch launch, a government initiative to encourage men to be part of the solution to this social ill.

We also launched our 'NotInMyName' campaign in support of the global campaign against violence against women and children.

I want to encourage everyone to participate in all of these activities so that we can, through our partnerships with government and civil society, rid society of this senseless violence against our women and children.

Let me also again congratulate all our firefighters and management for their participation in the International Mandela Day centenary celebrations which saw

Restoration following the Knysna fires



The Working on Fire Craggs Team pose with school learners and teachers of the Raphaeli Waldorf School

Working on Fire in the Southern Cape joined the Greenpop organisation in planting more than 300 trees at various schools and organisations during the Greenpop Eden Festival of Action 2018.

The Greenpop Festival of Action

was held in Livingstone, Zambia, for six years before being hosted in the Eden District Municipality.

With the aim of aiding the rehabilitation of the area's ecosystems and communities following the devastating Garden Route fires of 2017, the festival

programme included festival-goers planting thousands of trees, learning with sustainability leaders, eco-building to support local communities, enjoying collaborative environmental art, music and having fun.

Mandela Day build-up campaign

The year 2018 marks the centenary of the birth of former president Nelson Mandela. WOF Limpopo joined the South African Forestry Company LTD (SAFCOL) in the Mandela Day build-up campaign.

SAFCOL, in partnership with WOF and other stakeholders, hosted a soccer tournament at Entabeni plantation in the Vhembe District, Makhado Municipality.

Working on Fire Limpopo's Makhado and Phiphidi teams participated in this worthy campaign to organise donations of school shoes for less privileged learners. The shoes collected will be donated to a local high school on Mandela Day. Six soccer teams representing different organisations took part in the campaign which was in keeping with the declared Mandela Day theme 'Action against poverty'.

Players demonstrated a high level of fitness as they battled for the main title and trophy. The Makhado team lost the final to the SAFCOL team.

"This tournament is aimed at collecting school shoes for disadvantaged



Limpopo stakeholders participating in the SAFCOL Mandela Day build-up campaign to collect school shoes for less privileged learners in Makhado Municipality

secondary learners, as it is well known that in South Africa, learners drop out of school due to lack of basic needs. Each participating team was expected to bring along six pairs of shoes which will

be donated on 18th July to the identified school," says Avhasei Maswime, the Senior Forester at SAFCOL who was one of the coordinators.

us performing more than 100 acts of goodwill across the country.

Provinces that experience a winter fire season are in mid-season and I want to reiterate the importance of safety on the fire line. We need to ensure that we have ongoing safety briefings before we go out to a fireline or to perform fuel load reduction activities.

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Environmental Affairs
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
Co-operative Governance
Water and Sanitation

Working on Fire is an Expanded Public Works Programme which resides within the Department of Environmental Affairs.



Teams continue to conduct controlled burns to reduce the risk of fires

As the second month of the winter fire season commences in KwaZulu-Natal, teams across 32 bases are on high alert to respond to any call to wildfires in the province. Working on Fire and landowners were advised to start tracer belts from May and controlled burns during the month of June and July, as the fuel load would be dry enough to burn.

The uMngeni and Karkloof teams have been busy for the last two months constructing firebreaks along the N3. When constructing these breaks it is imperative for the incident commander or project manager to request a permit from the Fire Protection Association each time they want to burn. This permit will advise the landowner if the weather conditions are safe to burn breaks on that day and if not, they are not permitted to start any fires and would be liable for



uMngeni and Karkloof firefighters constructing a firebreak along the N3

any damages that might occur due to negligence.

Between April and June firefighters were called out to 47 fires in the province and more fires break out every week. The Ladysmith Team is currently camping on site while constructing firebreaks under Eskom transmission lines.



Nompilo Zondi, KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Communication Officer

WOF Free State constructs firebreaks at Ingula Pump Scheme



Participants from the Free State recently completed extensive firebreaks and block burns at the Eskom Ingula Pump Station close to Van Reenen, straddling the border of KwaZulu-Natal and Free State.

The project took roughly 10 days to complete due to the weather conditions in the area. The project was important because the prescribed burning will prevent any unwanted fires from starting and spreading out of control.

“We were 70 people in total and our resources were two fire trucks, one strike unit vehicle and a pool bakkie. We managed to complete the project successfully and I would like to commend every participant and especially the crew leaders who delivered quality work while maintaining safety standards throughout the project,” says Timothy Hedges, Free State Regional Manager.



Wayne Mokheithi, Free State Provincial Communication Officer

Sappi gives WOF thumbs up

The Dinokeng and JS Moroka teams successfully helped to burn firebreaks at giant paper producer Sappi’s Enstra Mill and the solid waste site in Springs recently.

“I want to thank all the firefighters for the sterling work done. The teams burned firebreaks around the waste site to protect the facility from dangerous fires,” says Dion Schroeder, a foreman at Sappi.

He pointed out that firebreaks are important as they prevent fire from destroying property. Schroeder urged other landowners in the area to also ensure that proper firebreaks are created this winter fire season to avoid catastrophic fires.

Schroeder says he invited the Working on Fire teams to help manage the risk of fire in the facility as potential



WOF firefighters joined EPWP community workers during a clean-up campaign with the Umjindi Trust community

fires could pose a serious threat to the site which used and stored highly combustible materials.

“The teams brush-cut the grass around the facility and then burned the firebreaks. They have been professional in executing their tasks,” he says. “A special

word of thanks to Larry Mathaba and his team for completing their work without any incidents or accidents in very difficult circumstances.”



Parapara Makgahlela, Gauteng Provincial Communication Officer

WOF Limpopo launches community fire awareness campaign

Working on Fire Limpopo, led by the Provincial General Manager Tshepo Malatji, launched its community fire awareness campaign at Abiot Primary School in preparation for the 2018 winter fire season.

As one of the leading programmes implementing integrated fire management services and specialising in veld and forest firefighting, WOF saw it as beneficial to prepare communities and landowners that are prone to wildfires for the upcoming winter fire season through the fire awareness campaign.

The fire awareness campaign was attended by various stakeholders such as the Departments of Health and Public Works, the Leyden Forum, community



members and learners from local high and primary schools.

During his keynote address, WOF Provincial General Manager Tshepo Malatji

pleaded with the people to refrain from starting fires that might end up being wildfires and destroying lives, properties and our environment. He highlighted that 90% of wildfires in the province are caused by human negligence.

Various groups of performers entertained the audience throughout the campaign launch. WOF Mogalakwena firefighters sealed the day with a demonstration of manual fuel load reduction wherein they reduced the tall grass along the fence of the school. They also demonstrated fire suppression.



Matema Gwangwa, Limpopo Provincial Communication Officer

Team joins with field rangers to reduce fire risks



The Vaalkop Team doing firebreaks together with field ranger students. Photo supplied by Vaalkop BCR, Reneiloe Malele

Fire prevention measures are very important, especial during the winter fire season when the risk of fire is high. The Vaalkop Team and field ranger students constructed firebreaks along the La Boheme conservation area fence to prevent fire from spreading to neighbouring farms.

Firebreaks are done to prevent fire from jumping from one area to another and limit the economic damage that can be caused by wildfires. Since the start of the winter fire season in June, Working on Fire teams in the North West have been putting in place various fire prevention measures, especially targeting high fire-risk areas.

These fire preventions measures included firebreaks, controlled burns, door-to-door campaigns and school fire awareness activities. These were done to decrease fuel loads and prepare communities for the winter fire season with the broad aim of decreasing fires in the province.

Working on Fire wants fire-resilient communities

As part of Integrated Fire Management, the Communications department addresses prevention and management of wildfires to promote the sustainability of life and environment. In preparing for the winter fire season, KwaZulu-Natal Community Fire Awareness Officer Simphiwe Dlamini coordinated a FireSafe workshop with the Machibisa community.

It is vital to educate communities on what to avoid during the winter season and how they can prepare for it. "It is my duty to educate community members to be aware of the risks of fire and how unwanted fires can be avoided in their area," says Dlamini.

Dlamini stressed the value of community members knowing how to protect themselves. FireSafe workshops are meant to empower community members who know their area better than anyone and who will be primarily affected by any



Simphiwe Dlamini presenting to community members

disaster, to have information to prevent and reduce the risk of losing property and protect their lives. It is important for them to reduce the risk of wildfires as emergency response services have to take care of a very large ward.

Dlamini says the workshop went very well and community members showed much enthusiasm.



Nompilo Zondi, KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Communication Officer

FireSafe message saves lives



During the winter fire season, firefighters in the Western Cape continue to roll out the #BeFireSafe message across the province in preparation for the 2018/19 summer fire season. The Cape Peninsula Fire Protection Association Mamre Team conducted

a fire awareness programme at the local library in Mamre covering topics such as evacuation plans and in-house safety.



Lauren Howard, Western Cape Provincial Communication Officer

Regional managers and crew leaders refresh knowledge



25 Crew Leaders and Regional Managers attended the 25-day prescribed burn refresher course at the Nelspruit Training Academy

Working on Fire (WOF) facilitated a 25-day specialised prescribed burn refresher course at the Nelspruit Training Academy from 4 to 25 June 2018 for senior Crew Leaders and Regional Managers within the programme.

The course aimed to assess, reinforce and provide safety measures that should be applied by managers and crew leaders on the fire line.

Vincent Lubisi, a former firefighter who worked his way up the

ranks to become a regional manager in Mpumalanga, says attending the refresher training has helped him intensify his team management skill, especially on the fire line.

"The training provided clear guidelines which have to be implemented on the fire line, which mainly prioritise our safety and those of the firefighters," says Lubisi.



Lebogang Maseko, Mpumalanga Provincial Communication Officer

Managers and crew leaders attend prescribed burning refresher

Regional Managers and Crew Leaders from the Free State recently attended a prescribed burning refresher course in Nelspruit to equip them to conduct firebreak and block burning. Prescribed burning is used for a variety of reasons. One of the most notable benefits is to maintain the health of an existing natural area containing native plants. The fire helps manage weeds and other growth and thus helps to reduce the risk of wildfires. Prescribed burning can also restore nutrients to the soil which leads to more desirable plant growth in the future.

The course was intended to remind attendees of the various methods used in effective prescribed burning as well as the necessary safety protocols to follow when conducting these integrated fire management activities.

"The refresher was highly informative and provided us with insight about



Crew Leaders and Regional Managers during the refresher training

how to safely and effectively conduct prescribed burning. We will be using this information extensively this winter fire season as we expect to construct many firebreaks for and alongside our many partners in the province," says David Mofokeng, Free State Regional Manager.



Wayne Mokhehi, Free State Provincial Communication Officer

Firefighters gain more skill

Three of the Carletonville Team's firefighters, Karabo Raletsito, Siphokazi Mboyiya and Tebogo Ledwaba, attended a course in high-angle rescue arranged by the West Rand District Municipality in conjunction with the University of Johannesburg. The trio had earlier completed a course in basic ambulance assistance.

The two-week course was held at the Carletonville fire station. The course instructor said he had wanted to start with WOF firefighters who had matric certificates. The course training focussed on the height.

Raletsito says the course was quite interesting because it gave him insight into serious high-angle rescue missions. Mboyiya says at first sight she was scared, but her attitude changed with time.

"The course cost us R810 per head. We really need to prepare ourselves



Siphokazi Mboyiya and Karabo Raletsito who completed a course in high-angle rescue

further for future opportunities," says Raletsito.

The three had managed to save the money to pay for the course and agree that the course will add value to their skills and experience.

"We have learned many things during the course. Already we have added the training to our CVs," says Ledwaba.



Parapara Makgahlela, Gauteng Provincial Communication Officer

HAT drivers ready to hit the road

Thirty-seven High Altitude Team (HAT) drivers successfully concluded their Blue Card refresher driver training course at



HAT drivers successfully concluded their Blue Card refresher driver training course

the Nelspruit Training Academy on 6 July 2018.

Encompassing comprehensive 4x4 driving, vehicle maintenance, pre-trip inspections, vehicle safety and administration, the refresher training course aims to prepare drivers to safely transport HAT participants to their areas of work.

Struggling to hide his excitement over the exceptional performance of the drivers during training, HAT general manager Dave Williams urged participants to keep up the good work.

"My heart is filled with a deep sense of pride for the dedication and commitment you conveyed throughout

the training. I am extremely proud of you all," Williams told the drivers.

Drivers from the Western Cape, Limpopo, Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal participated in the refresher.

HAT is implemented through the Working on Fire programme on behalf of the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) and provides work opportunities for over 60 young men and women from disadvantaged communities by training them as Rope Access Technicians.



Lebogang Maseko, Mpumalanga Provincial Communication Officer

WOF alumni visit to inspire participants

Working on Fire (WOF) remains committed to restoring dignity to disadvantaged communities across the country by equipping unemployed youth with the various skills and experience to better their chances of getting permanent employment opportunities outside the programme.

As part of the Social Development Department initiative during June and July, WOF alumni visited their former colleagues to inspire and motivate young firefighters to never give up on their dreams.

Social Development Practitioner Hloniphile Ndlovu says, "At times when you've been trying to better your life and it feels impossible to develop yourself, it takes hearing a familiar voice or face to encourage you to see that the world is a big place and there are too many



WOF alumni motivating former colleagues

opportunities for you to just give up."

Firefighters were visited by alumni who have been employed by various entities such as municipality fire & rescue departments, Old Mutual, eThekweni Metro Police, Dunlop, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, Fire Hawks and AVBOB, as well as self-employed alumni.

Awesome messages were conveyed by WOF alumni, including saving as much as you can, never listening to anyone that tries to put you down, not letting one failed interview deter you from applying

somewhere else, and dream big and eventually your time will come.

"I hope this will inspire firefighters to never give up on their dreams, think positively and always invest in their future," says Ndlovu.



Nompilo Zondi, KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Communication Officer

Base manager speaks of her journey at WOF

Working on Fire aims to motivate current participants with mentorship and an entrepreneurship programme which will assist in creating a positive attitude to accessing opportunities for employment in the formal economy.

During Youth Month Queen Khoza, who is now a base manager at LEFPA and a former Working on Fire firefighter, visited the Graskop Team in Mpumalanga to give a motivational talk and share her experience of how she was able to secure formal employment after firefighting within the Working on Fire programme.

Khoza was joined by Takalani Mufamadi, an Assistant Director for a youth development programme at



Former firefighter Queen Khoza speaking to her former teammates, all once unemployed rural youth

the provincial Department of Rural Development and Land Reform in Mpumalanga, who spoke about the National Rural Youth Service Corps (NARYSEC) programme and skills development programmes which target unemployed rural youth.



Lebogang Maseko, Mpumalanga Provincial Communication Officer

Firefighters moving up the ranks



Part of the Crew Leader course selection process included a fitness test

Working on Fire in the North West hosted the Type 2 Crew Leader course selection process which took place at the Castello Base. This process included 16 hopeful participants drawn from 16 bases around the province.

Provincial management had decided to give participants with more firefighting experience a chance to move up the firefighting ranks through the Type 2 Crew Leader course.

The Ground Operations Manager, Manase Mpholoane says, "Each base nominated a person who has shown leadership qualities. The selection criteria were a theory test and a fitness test. Only seven of the 16 participants who performed best will undergo the Type 2 Crew Leader course."

The successful candidates will be sent to the Nelspruit Academy where they will receive intensive training in integrated fire management, leadership skills, health and safety, fitness and first aid.

Working on Fire engages future leaders

In the spirit of Youth Month, WOF Limpopo's Social Development Practitioner Michael Ramatsea engaged different roleplayers to encourage participants to see life beyond WOF.

"We invited former WOF participants to have talks with our current participants, engaging them through motivational talks and encouraging them to grab opportunities outside the WOF programme," says Ramatsea.

During the workshops, the former participants shared their journey to their current careers and discussed the difficulty of exiting the WOF programme.

"Due to the high unemployment rate in our country, it's not easy to find better employment out there. I would say the skills and experience that we acquire at WOF give us a boost when we look for greener pastures," said Vusi Shiburi, a former WOF participant who is now employed at the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

Shiburi encouraged WOF partici-



Mogalakwena participants attending the 'mentoring the future leaders' workshop at their base

pants to stop complaining as it delays progress. He highlighted fear as one of the biggest obstacles preventing our society's youth from chasing after their dreams.

Apart from the motivational talks, the Department of Economic Development and Tourism and SEDA were invited to address the participants and advise them on how to start their own businesses and how to apply for funds.

They were informed of the different advantages and disadvantages of starting private companies and cooperatives and how to go about applying for funds for both. The participants were eager to learn and frequently engaged the guests by asking relevant questions.



Matema Gwangwa, Limpopo Provincial Communication Officer



Mogalakwena firefighters raised their voices against children and women abuse during the #NotInMyName movement activity at their base in Limpopo

WOF Limpopo campaigns against abuse

The Child Protection Week campaign kicked off across South Africa on 27 May and ran until 3 June. Working on Fire participated in the #NotInMyName movement in support of the Child Protection Week campaign, taking a stand against the abuse faced by many South Africans, especially children. Limpopo Provincial Social Development Practitioner Michael Ramatsea visited the WOF participants at their bases to educate and empower them about their rights and responsibilities, especially

emphasising children's and women's rights. "Child Protection Week aims to raise awareness of the rights of children and allows us to shine the spotlight on children's issues," says Ramatsea.

During the educational and awareness workshop it was highlighted that children are more likely to be abused by those who are suppose to love, nurture and protect them. But if family members are abusing them who should the children turn to for help?

"As of today we make a vow that

we will not keep quiet when we see the injustices happening to the children and women in our households and communities. Instead we will blow the whistle and contact the relevant offices for assistance," said Tonic Matlhare, Type 1 Crew Leader at Nebo Base. Evil prevails when good people do nothing. Be like WOF participants and break the silence.



Matema Gwangwa, Limpopo Provincial Communication Officer

WOF Kids Initiative kicks off in the Western Cape

It was all fun and games at the Limietberg Base as Working on Fire (WOF) hosted 11 of our participants' children. This was done as part of the WOF's Kids Initiative programme, which seeks to instil the virtues of hard work and resilience at a tender age, as exemplified by many firefighters in the programme.

Colleen Jones, Western Cape Social Development Practitioner (SDP) says, "The WOF Kids initiative is to focus on our firefighters' children and the topic I decided to do with the Limietberg Team was 'parenting and family preservation'. Our core focus was 'play', as the kids had the chance to partake in playful and fun activities to express themselves to their parents."

In the Southern Cape, SDP Lusheen Britz hosted her WOF Kids initiative at the Goudveld Base during Child Protection Week, focussing on the children's



Limietberg participants did playful activities with their children

needs and teaching them self-defence techniques. Britz says, "As parents we don't want to scare our kids with the knowledge of self-defence, but it's our job to arm them with the tools they need to stay safe. Goudveld participants practiced self-defence techniques with their children at the base, and it was a huge success."



Lauren Howard, Western Cape Provincial Communication Officer

Youth educated about the dangers of drugs and alcohol

Baviaanskloof and Van Stadens High Altitude teams (HAT) in the Eastern Cape recently conducted drug and alcohol awareness in Hankey. The WOF HAT programme reduces invasive species in catchment areas to sustain the water supply.

Regional Manager of HAT, Susan Rall, says the two teams collaborated with the local youth soccer team, the ward councillor and local children to march through the streets of Hankey against drug and alcohol abuse.

Rall said that the Eastern Cape SDP Siphokazi Jack and the crew leaders of the teams took turns to address the children regarding drugs. "Youth should not be tempted to use any kind of drug as drugs can be so addictive and it's not easy to get out once you start using them," explains Jack.

She says exposure to drugs, quality of parenting, peer group influence and biological/inherent predisposition towards drug addiction are some of the reasons young people end up using drugs. "Being aware of these risk factors can assist families, health professionals, schools and community workers with identifying at-risk youth and aid in



Baviaanskloof and Van Stadens High Altitude Teams conducted drug and alcohol abuse awareness

reducing or eliminating risk factors through prevention measures that include awareness," Jack says.

She says that they taught youth that alcohol and drug use among adolescents carried a high risk of school underachievement, delinquency, teenage pregnancy and depression.

"Prevention is better than cure, that's why we must work as a team in educating each other about the dangers of drugs and alcohol abuse," says Jack.

After the march, as it was a school holiday, many children came to watch their friends play friendly soccer and netball matches against WOF teams.



Nthabiseng Mokone, Eastern Cape Provincial Communication Officer

Heilbron Team creates food security for themselves and their community

The Working on Fire Heilbron Team in the Free State have a garden at their base that they use to grow vegetables for themselves and their surrounding communities. The team developed the garden as a way to assist the surrounding communities in which many of them live.

This initiative to donate fresh vegetables to the community was motivated by wanting to combat hunger in these communities. In the garden the team grows different seasonal vegetables such as spinach, potatoes and beetroot.

"We share the vegetables among ourselves but we realise that it is our duty to assist the communities surrounding us and that is why we also donate the vegetables to community members," says Tshokolo Moroeng, Heilbron Base Communications Representative.



Heilbron Team members working in their garden

Although the firefighters face numerous challenges in growing these vegetables their garden serves as an encouragement to members at the base to start their own gardens at home and use them as a means of providing for themselves.



Wayne Mokhetli, Free State Provincial Communication Officer

Barberton firefighters keep Kruger clean

In efforts to raise environmental awareness, a team of Working on Fire firefighters in Mpumalanga recently joined scores of community members at the Luphisi Sportsground in a clean-up campaign initiated by the South African National Parks (SANParks) in conjunction with Total SA.

Themed 'Keep Kruger Clean', the campaign was a call of action to persuade community members to take an active stand against pollution and become environmental agents, combating pollution in their surroundings.

The group of firefighters also used the opportunity to educate members of the Luphisi community about the role they needed to play to safeguard their homes against fire.

"Environmental awareness is not just our duty as veld and forest firefighters; we all have a role to play as a nation," says senior Crew Leader Oupa Manyisa.



Firefighters from the Barberton Team participate in a clean-up campaign initiated by SANParks

According to Manyisa, "anything can fan flames, especially dry grass this fire season. I would advise every individual to play their role to mitigate fire risks."

The clean-up followed the global commemoration of World Environment Day in the month of June, themed 'Beat Plastic Pollution'.



Lebogang Maseko, Mpumalanga Provincial Communication Officer

Former firefighter secures job

Serano Taai, a former firefighter from Witelsbos Base in Eastern Cape, thanks Working on Fire for all the skills he acquired while he was in the programme.

After joining the programme in 2014 as a firefighter, 24-year-old Taai completed the HIV awareness training course, advanced veld and forest firefighting, First Aid Level 1 and 2 as well as a building construction course.

Taai says he was selected in 2016 to be the Base Communications Representative for the team.

"That was an amazing opportunity for me as it helped me to be a better person when it comes to communications skills,

presentation skills, writing skills as well as being a better photographer," Taai says.

He says that in his time as the BCR he organised awareness programmes for his base and he also played a major liaison role between management and the team.

"I got many skills in the programme that made me a better person and some of them are helping me a lot in my current job," says Taai, who was recently hired by Tsitsikamma Crystal Water as an Ejector Operator.

"Getting this job made me so happy and I want to thank WOF as I am where I am today because of the programme," he says.

Taai advises other firefighters to work hard, be patient and always have a goal in their lives as that will take them far.



Nthabiseng Mokone, Eastern Cape Provincial Communication Officer



Serano Taai thanks the WOF programme for being empowered

Working on Fire paved the way to employment



Former participant gets a better job

"Working on Fire has played a major role in empowering me as a young man and I appreciate all the skills that I got since I joined the programme," says Siseko Mabandla, a former firefighter who joined the WOF programme at Ntywenka Base in 2012. Mabandla recently got a job as a Stock Controller at BKB.

"Prior to joining the programme I worked at a restaurant to pay my fees as I was doing IT at the University of Cape Town after matriculating in 2007," says Mabandla, who dropped out after two years after he could not continue due to financial problems. "I then looked for a job which was not easy to find till I heard about the recruiting that was taking place in WOF."

"I worked as a firefighter for a year and in 2013 I was promoted to be the Assistant Stock Controller," says 30-year-old Mabandla.

He says being promoted changed his life for the better as he developed a lot in the procurement department. Mabandla says that Working on Fire gave him many skills including firefighting, store controlling skills and communication skills.

"The programme became my stepping stone and I have grown a lot in my career. Now I am a better person even in my new job," he says.



Nthabiseng Mokone, Eastern Cape Provincial Communication Officer

The successful recruits will be trained in Nelspruit in advanced firefighting, just in time for the 2018/19 summer fire season. With this recruitment drive WOF has once again contributed to the reduction of unemployment and poverty in marginalised communities.



Lauren Howard, Western Cape Provincial Communication Officer

Pursuing a career outside the programme



Thapelo Mathabatha is now a trainee electrical engineer for an automaker

Thapelo Mathabatha exited the programme recently and is a trainee electrician with a company that produces electrical glasses for Ford South Africa in a Garankuwa plant. He was based at the Roodeplaat Nature Reserve team.

"I have a diploma in electrical engineering from a private college in Pretoria. I completed my final modules while working as a firefighter," he says.

Mathabatha is grateful to the programme as it was his first employer. He says that the programme taught him occupational health and safety, which are among the most important things needed in his current job.

"I am now pursuing my dream career which WOF has been part of in many ways," says Mathabatha, who feels his success should serve to inspire and motivate his former colleagues to reach for the higher skies.



Parapara Makgahlela, Gauteng Provincial Communication Officer

Participant used stipend to start business

Roodeplaat Team's Johannes Dingaan is an aspirant carpenter who has already done woodwork in various households around Pretoria to supplement his stipend. He does not have formal carpentry training.

Dingaan says he needs to register his business formally because he often gets jobs.

"I would like to exit the programme but the problem is fear and lack of formal training. However, these are my temporary challenges."

He says he repairs and installs wooden units in households that he makes himself during his time off.

"I have passion for woodwork," he says, adding that he used his stipend



Johannes Dingaan is a self-taught carpenter who aspires to a business career

to buy the carpentry tools for his business.

"I am working on a plan of going for training on a part-time basis by the end of the year. This will give me confidence and advanced skills going forward," he says.



Parapara Makgahlela, Gauteng Provincial Communication Officer

Restoring dignity through work opportunities



Young men and women completing the fitness test in a bid to earn a place as a firefighter

The lives of a number of young men and women from the Tulbagh community in the Witzenberg Municipality will never be the same again as they bid farewell to being unemployed.

Working on Fire Western Cape conducted a recruitment drive at the Tulbagh Base with the aim of filling 10 slots. More than 40 youth from surround-

ing communities responded to the call and gathered at the base to try their luck at the physically demanding recruitment evaluation. The recruitment assessment included a 2,4km run, and completing 40 push-ups and 40 sit-ups within set time limits. The youth were all eager to secure a spot in the new team and gave it their all.



Working on Fire management and firefighters hosted a variety of activities across the country in honour of Nelson Mandela's legacy. These acts of goodwill included encouraging education, helping at elderly centres, lending a helping hand to the homeless, taking care of the environment, caring for the animals and bringing relief to those in need.

